

<i>OFFICE OF WORKER ADVOCACY</i>
<i>DIRECTOR FOR WORKER ADVOCACY</i>

Mission

The Office of Worker Advocacy was established to provide help to current and former employees of DOE contractors with qualifying occupational illnesses obtain benefits through State workers' compensation programs. The Office will establish liaison with State Workers Compensation offices to facilitate such claims. The Office will establish an Advisory Committee of stakeholders from State agencies workers unions, medical and public health organizations to advise the office on its advocacy practices and procedures.

Functions

Work with State benefits administrators to review and track compensation claims for occupational illnesses currently pending in the Department's system.

Establish and manage an Advisory Committee consisting of diverse stakeholders (union representatives workers, occupational physicians, etc.) to advise the office on its policies and procedures.

Expedite claims that can be processed without further review and help workers get any additional information needed to process the remaining claims.

Operate a toll-free hotline for workers who are interested in filing workers' compensation claims with their state programs or need assistance with previously filed claims.

Develop and implement a program to educate and reach out to workers and their families, unions and others about the benefits and assistance available to sick workers and their survivors.

Provide worker advocates, who will serve as liaison with State workers' compensation officials, benefits administrators, occupational physicians, union representatives, workers' compensation experts, and others. The role of these advocates, who are not legal representatives for workers, is to help workers:

- gather existing records and data from worker to form a case file to be provided to physicians panel for evaluation;
- identify existing and perceived barriers to filing successful workers' compensation claims; and

- work with State workers' compensation offices toward successful completion of the claims review and approval process.